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The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon Room 3E 880
Washington DC 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta

I am disappointed that your staff was unable to meet with Ambassador Peter Tomsen to discuss his book on Afghanistan and Pakistan. While I understand that both you and Mr. Tomsen have busy schedules, I fear you and your staff may be missing pertinent information and insight that could help devise a successful strategy in South Asia.

You only need to read the headlines to see the erosion in our relationship with the Pakistani military and intelligence services. Recent comments from retiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Mullen have described how the Pakistani military and Inter Service Intelligence agency actively cooperate with two of the most deadly terror networks sowing the seeds of destruction and chaos in Afghanistan. Ambassador Tomsen's book, The Wars of Afghanistan provides detailed information on the tribal structures and the realities of Pakistani involvement with terrorist groups. I sincerely hope that you and your staff will read his book.

I have also enclosed a column Mr. Tomsen wrote for the most recent edition of *World Policy Journal*. I hope you and your staff will find the piece informative.

The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan grows more dire nearly every day. I again ask that you use your authority to create the Af/Pak Study Group. We owe nothing less to the men and women making the ultimate sacrifice to ensure that we have a long-term strategy for success in the region.

Best wishes.

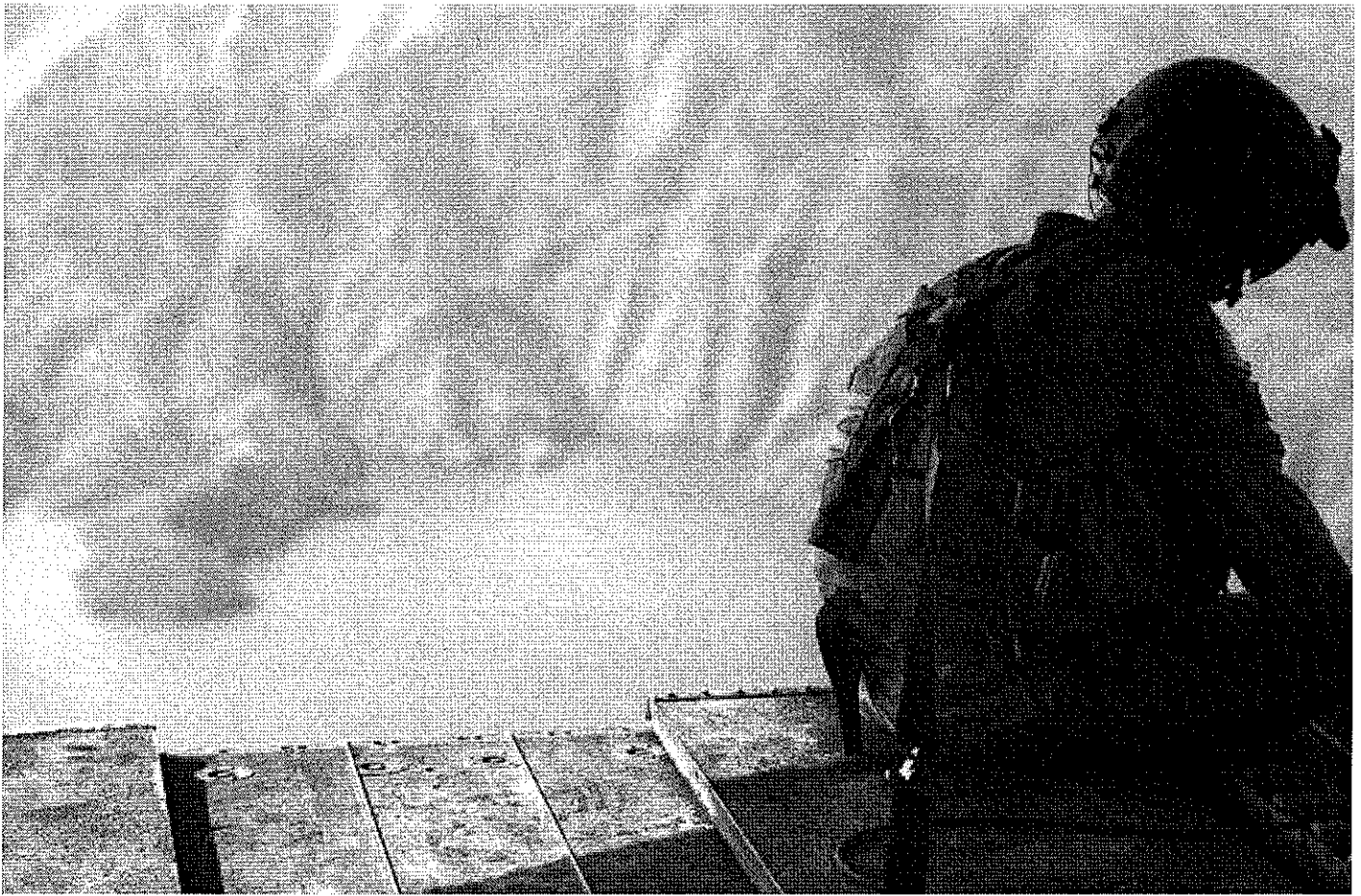
Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

FRW:cw

*It is very difficult to
get a response from your office*

Pakistan: With Friends Like These...



By Peter Tomsen

It was 4 a.m. on June 23, 2001, and a few distant stars punctured the darkness above the Uzbek city of Samarkand. I stepped out into the night, leaving the lobby of a concrete, Stalinist-era hotel, accompanied by Abdul Haq, an Afghan Pashtun leader in the anti-Taliban resistance. At his invitation, I was accompanying Haq to his meeting with northern Tajik Commander Ahmed Shah Masood to discuss a strategy to end the long Afghan war.

We climbed into a waiting SUV, along with Haq's bodyguard and American businessman James Ritchie, a friend of Haq. The driver headed east, toward Dushanbe, the capital of neighboring Tajikistan, a 12-hour drive away. We were scheduled to hold two days of meetings in Dushanbe with Masood, known as "the Lion of the Panjshir," after the valley from which he hailed in northern Afghanistan. Haq looked forward to enlisting Masood's cooperation in his plan to overthrow the Pakistan-backed Taliban regime in Kabul. He hoped Masood would help rally the anti-Taliban centers around the country to replace the Taliban regime with an inter-ethnic Afghan coalition under the political leadership of Zahir Shah, the one-time Afghan king who lived in exile in Rome. Haq's plan was sound. No ethnic group in Afghanistan comprised a majority of the population. All demanded a seat at the table and were well armed. Haq said he

wanted me along to reinforce his effort to bring Afghans together. Moderate pluralism, he said, not Taliban totalitarianism, was the Afghan way.

Masood greeted us warmly in his living room at his Dushanbe home. Nine years had elapsed since we last met in his sprawling Ministry of Defense office in Kabul, before the Taliban came to power. The crevices in his face were now longer and deeper.

Masood had arrived only an hour before us, flying by helicopter directly from a battlefield in Afghanistan. He described how his forces beat back a 10-day Taliban offensive against his northern redoubt near the Tajikistan border. The battle had just ended that morning. His spies in Pakistan and at the Pakistani army's headquarters in Konduz, west of the battle lines, had briefed him on the offensive beforehand. Pakistani military officers, he said, directed the Taliban attack. Masood told us the name of a Pakistani general commanding the offensive and identified some of the specific Pakistani army units participating in the operation. He claimed a force comprised of 25,000 Pakistani army soldiers and Pakistani religious students were fighting alongside a horde of Taliban fighters, Osama bin Laden's two Arab brigades, and 300 Uzbek militants. The Pakistani officers, not the Taliban, planned and implemented the annual offensives launched under the Taliban's name. Masood complained that, first, the Afghan people had been subjected to the 1979 Soviet invasion from the north. Now they faced a second invasion, this one by Pakistan from the south.

The following day, Haq and Masood agreed to coordinate their anti-Taliban activities and support the creation of an Afghan government-in-exile headed by Zahir Shah. It would include all the principal groups who opposed Taliban rule. Back at the American embassy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, I prepared three classified cables on the meeting. I acknowledged the obstacles the two moderate-nationalist Afghan commanders would face, but wrote that their strategy had a better chance of driving the Taliban and al-Qaida from Afghanistan than any American strategy I had seen. The plan was to be Afghan-led and implemented by Afghans.

COOL RECEPTION

The plan encountered a cool if not hostile reception in Washington. Like the Clinton administration before it, the George W. Bush administration had been deluded into believing that Pakistan remained a reliable ally in fighting terrorism and stabilizing Afghanistan—even while Pakistan's army and its military intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), were coordinating with international Muslim terrorists like al-Qaida, Pakistani religious parties, and Pakistani Islamic militant groups to turn Afghanistan into a springboard for radical Islam.

From 1993 to September 11, 2001—in perhaps one of the greatest blunders in American diplomatic history—the United States government outsourced America's Afghan policy to Pakistan, which meant to the Pakistani military and the powerful ISI. American policy was, in practice, giving free rein to the fox in the chicken coup. The unholy alliance of the ISI, al-Qaida, and Taliban radicals burrowed into Afghanistan. While bin Laden launched global terrorist attacks against the United States, Pakistan's military and the ISI organized, armed, and supplied the annual military offensives besieging Masood's northern enclave. American ignorance of

Pakistan's radical Islamist course in Afghanistan reinforced the isolation of the most successful Afghan commander fighting al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Less than three months after the Dushanbe meeting, in the quiet, early morning hours of September 9, 2001, in northern Afghanistan, Masood and an Afghan friend were reading aloud poems written by the popular 14th century Persian poet Hafez. His friend grew uncomfortable when the poems referred to premonitions of imminent death. One poem ended, "You must value this night sitting and talking, because in the days to come this night will not be repeated."

Later that afternoon, two al-Qaida assassins, posing as journalists, detonated explosives hidden inside a munitions belt and a camera, killing Masood and his press spokesman. On October 26, 2001, the ISI-linked Taliban Interior Minister, Abdul Razak, brutally murdered Abdul Haq as he attempted to reach his tribal village in Afghanistan to lead a rebellion against the Taliban. Within six months of their Dushanbe meeting, the two most formidable Afghan enemies of al-Qaida and the Taliban were dead.

WIN-LOSE...

The pernicious alliance of the ISI, the Taliban mullahs, al-Qaida, and Pakistani religio-terrorist organizations viewed moderate-nationalist Afghans like Haq and Masood as the main obstacles to transforming tribal Afghanistan into a radical Islamic state. They schemed to transform the war wracked country into a platform to carry their radical Sunni ideology into Muslim Central Asia, the Middle East, and beyond. Then as now, targeted assassinations of real and potential Afghan moderate leaders were key elements in their strategy. In the late 1980s and continuing through the 1990s, scores of anti-Taliban Afghan tribal leaders, commanders, and politicians, including President Hamid Karzai's father, were gunned down in broad daylight on Pakistani streets. Not one assassin was ever arrested, much less tried and convicted. The assassinations advanced their goal of establishing Islamabad's hegemony in Afghanistan.

The army's massive covert support for radical Sunni Islamist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan had three primary goals. The first was to maintain the military's domination of the Pakistani state by suppressing the nation's two secular democratic parties. The second sought to forge a broader Islamist bloc of Pakistan, Kashmir, Afghanistan, and eventually Central Asia to balance India, Pakistan's traditional rival. Finally, Pakistan's generals hoped to secure a leading position for Pakistan in the Muslim world.

Until 9/11, Washington at best misunderstood, and at worst turned a blind eye to, Pakistan's covert military role in the ascendancy of radical Islam in Afghanistan. American support of anti-Taliban Afghans and pressure on Pakistan could have encouraged the mobilization of moderate Afghan groups to overthrow the Taliban and restore the pluralistic, modernizing Afghan state that existed before the 1978 communist coup. Instead, American intelligence agencies and diplomats failed to uncover the depth of ISI's clandestine support of the Taliban and al-Qaida's expansion into Afghanistan from bases in Pakistan.

Washington's policy during the 1990s, in effect, buttressed Pakistan's destructive strategy in Afghanistan and on global terrorism. Washington's acceptance of Pakistan's claim that it was

working with the United States added up to an “if we win, we lose” strategy. “Not one bullet” was going to the Taliban from Pakistan, ISI Director Nasim Rana told U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott in February 1996. This was a blatant lie. Later, Presidents Clinton and Bush naively pressed Pakistan to help bring bin Laden to justice after al-Qaida bombed two American embassies in Africa in 1998 and the destroyer USS Cole in the Port of Aden in Yemen in 2000. At the time, the ISI was cooperating with bin Laden to train thousands of international jihadists in Afghanistan. According to the 9/11 Commission, the United States learned that retired ISI chief General Hamid Gul leaked to the Taliban and al-Qaida when to expect (or not to expect) American cruise missile strikes. Gul was a “private sector” ISI cutout—a middle-man implementing the ISI agenda through Taliban leaders and bin Laden, whom he knew well.

Washington’s Pakistan policy remained on automatic pilot as coalition forces moved into Afghanistan after 9/11. The Taliban and al-Qaida suffered numerous casualties but their top leaders and most of their foot soldiers merely retreated back across the border to their old sanctuaries inside Pakistan. It took about three and a half years for the ISI to rebuild the Taliban and other radical units and send them back into Afghanistan. That strategy exactly mirrored the ISI strategy from 1994 to 1998, when the ISI organized, armed, and sent thousands of Taliban, Pakistani, and other extremists into Afghanistan to overthrow the Mujahidin government in Kabul.

...DRAW

When major Taliban counterattacks resumed in 2005, there was no Afghan army to oppose them, only unreliable warlords paid by the U.S. military and CIA. The United States had shifted its attention and forces to Iraq. A March 2002 report by an inter-agency team led by U.S. army Major General Charles Campbell recommended the immediate resuscitation of the Afghan army, starting with an 18-month crash program to train 26 battalions. The report was pigeon-holed. In the absence of an Afghan army, the Pentagon responded to the Taliban resurgence by deploying more and more coalition troops, a trend that peaked at around 140,000, including 98,000 Americans, by the end of 2010. The troop buildup went against Haq and Masood’s views that Afghan, and not foreign soldiers, should do the fighting and dying to defend Afghanistan.

The Taliban’s recent advances in Afghanistan look distressingly like the 1990s, when the ISI’s Taliban allies had infiltrated Afghanistan’s Pashtun belt, pushing into the west and north, threatening the Kabul region. Since 9/11, assassins operating from protected safe havens in Pakistan have systematically killed most of the moderate Afghan commanders who fought with Masood and Haq in the Soviet-Afghan war. The victims have included Haq’s brother, Afghan Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir, and northern police chief General Mohammed Daoud Daoud. In July 2011, Taliban assassins killed President Hamid Karzai’s half-brother Ahmed Wali and Commander Jan Mohammad, who had helped Karzai capture Kandahar from the Taliban in December, 2001.

So far, there have been three Taliban-led attempts to assassinate Karzai, one which I personally witnessed in Kandahar in September 2002. A Taliban agent inside the governor’s security force walked up to Karzai’s vehicle and fired at him through the rear window. Pandemonium ensued.

Roadside crowds scattered in all directions. The U.S. Navy Seals protecting the president fired back, killing the assassin in a hail of bullets.

Pakistan's military strategists have been able to use their Taliban proxies to regain, a decade later, much of the foothold in Afghanistan they lost during the first October to December 2001 American military intervention. Even after the spectacular May 2011 raid that killed bin Laden in an army garrison town (without alerting Pakistan's military about the operation), Pakistan's leaders, civilian as well as military, are still fielding shop-worn tactics to preempt a tougher American response to Islamabad's proxy war strategy. Their often not terribly subtle tactics include plausible denial, cultivation of friendly CIA and U.S. military constituencies in Washington, sham promises that a major shift in Pakistan's policies is finally coming, warnings that Pakistan may play the China card against Washington, and bogus claims that the United States needs to make up for past "betrayals" of Pakistan. Each of these ruses, and a few more, are little changed from the time I was American special envoy to the Afghan resistance 20 years ago. The Pakistani army's preposterous claim that it did not know the world's most wanted terrorist was hiding inside a large residential compound near Pakistan's national military academy is just the latest example.

COLD REALITIES

The impressive handling of the successful bin Laden raid in May 2011 and the withholding of \$800 million of aid for Pakistan in July signal a more transparent, candid, and tougher American approach to Pakistan, shorn of past pretenses that Islamabad was a reliable ally in Afghanistan and in the struggle against terrorism. The current downward spiral in U.S.-Pakistani relations is partly driven by the exposure of this myth.

The silver lining in the current downturn of U.S.-Pakistani relations is that the cold realities dividing Washington and Islamabad for over two decades are now emerging publicly. Some American commentators are referring to Pakistan as a "frenemy." Public opinion polls in Pakistan cast America in an even worse light. But, the unpleasant realities propelling the downturn should no longer be pretended away but addressed frankly, as Washington has long done with China. Conditions as they actually exist should form the foundation for dialogue between the two countries. The new direction in U.S.-Pakistan relations must pragmatically attempt to reduce differences and enlarge areas of agreement, to build up the "friend" side and minimize the "enemy" dimension of the equation.

For its part, the United States should not be timid about publicly discussing the ISI's record of sponsoring terrorist networks in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Pakistani and Afghan networks that the ISI created in the late 1980s and the 1990s and have fostered inside Pakistan are the main source of the Islamist terrorism ripping apart Afghanistan and threatening the United States and its allies. Three ISI connected Pakistani religio-terrorist organizations—Lashkar-i Taiba, Jaish-i Mohammad and Harakat ul Mujahidin—are on the State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. The three ISI-supported Afghan terrorist groups keeping Afghanistan in a state of continuous war are the Afghan Taliban led by Mullah Omar plus the Haqqani and Hekmatyar fronts. They are lined up shoulder-to-shoulder on the Afghan-Pakistani border with the Afghan Taliban in northwest Pakistan, the Haqqani network in the central sector, and the Hekmatyar

group in far northeastern Pakistan. Despite the killing of thousands of U.S.-led coalition troops, foreign aid workers attempting to reconstruct Afghanistan, as well as Afghan security personnel and civilians, Washington has still not designated these three Afghan terrorist groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations. Long overdue and mandated by U.S. law, this action should be taken immediately.

ISI's backing of Pakistan-based terrorist groups active in India in the early 1990s led then-Secretary of State James Baker to write a letter to Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on January 9, 1993. That letter delivered a warning from the George H.W. Bush administration to Pakistan that it could be named a state sponsor of terrorism. Six months later, the Clinton administration informed Pakistan that it was no longer under consideration for placement on the list. Neither the George W. Bush nor the Obama administration to date has re-activated that warning. It should. Naming Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism would trigger an across the board cut-off of American aid, while steps to restrict foreign assistance to Pakistan from international organizations and U.S. allies would likely follow.

Since 1993, the ISI-linked Pakistani terrorist groups have become much more—not less—active in international terrorism. Meanwhile, ISI-assisted Afghan terrorist organizations continue to carry out Pakistan's war in Afghanistan. Last year was the bloodiest since 9/11. And it is likely that coalition and Afghan casualties in 2011 will exceed those suffered in 2010.

THE WAY AHEAD

Continuing the failed approach of mixing praise and rhetorical concern about Pakistan's cooperation in fighting terrorism coupled with high-level visits and communications will not convince Islamabad's generals to cease assisting the Afghan Taliban, close down militant sanctuaries in Pakistan, or actively hunt down terrorists within their country. As long as Pakistan's army sustains safe havens for terrorists, war will continue to tear apart Afghanistan, no matter how many troops NATO deploys or how many Afghan troops it trains.

A more realistic and tougher American policy towards Pakistan should take into account a number of regional geopolitical trends driven by opposition to Pakistan's covert promotion of violent Islamism. Indo-American relations continue to improve, largely driven by shared economic interests but also by anti-terrorist concerns. Duplicating a geopolitical pattern in the 1990s, the closer the predominately Pashtun Taliban get to the Amu Darya River, dividing Afghanistan from the former Soviet Stans, the more Russia, Central Asian states, India, and Iran will coordinate to assist Afghan Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara anti-Taliban resistance groups. China, too, will worry about Taliban and al-Qaida penetration of its westernmost province, Xinjiang, where Muslim separatists are active. Counterproductive results of Pakistan's proxy wars in Afghanistan will also be felt at home as Pakistan surrenders the extensive regional economic benefits an Afghan peace accord could deliver to Pakistan.

WEIGHING THE RISKS

The risks of pressuring Pakistan to move away from its support for terrorist groups must be weighed against the risks of exposing the United States and its allies to future terrorist attacks

launched from bases in Pakistan. If the United States again flinches from strong action because it fears Pakistani retaliation, Pakistani leaders will see no need to change their policies.

Washington should not underestimate the leverage it can command to pressure Islamabad to help end the war in Afghanistan and dismantle the terrorist organizations and sanctuaries operating inside Pakistan. If Pakistan's army does not respond to American diplomatic insistence to end its two-decade-old proxy war, the United States should increase bilateral and multilateral pressure on Islamabad. Pakistan would have a difficult time finding foreign support. Today, all the world's leading Muslim governments oppose the terrorism emanating from Pakistani safe havens. China, as well as Shiite-dominated Iran, have much to lose from the radical Sunni violence that the Afghan Taliban would bring back to Afghanistan. Pakistan's further ramping up the insurgency would likely backfire by strengthening the growing regional and global correlation of forces against the protected terrorist sanctuaries in Pakistan, symbolized by bin Laden's Abbottabad safe haven.

While the United States must take into account Pakistan's nuclear weapons arsenal, the West has successfully dealt with far more powerful nuclear regimes for over half a century. Pakistan's nuclear capabilities should not deter Washington from taking a tougher approach to Islamabad for fostering terrorist networks and providing them sanctuaries. Any nuclear threat would weaken Pakistan's strategic position, driving the United States and the rest of the international community toward India.

If Pakistan does not address American concerns, the Obama administration must defend its national interests and those of its allies. This would mean a more assertive policy, including public insistence that Pakistan eliminate its terrorist sanctuaries, threatening to place and then placing Pakistan on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, and working with others to end Pakistan's sabotage of the intra-Afghan peace dialogue. The U.S. and its coalition must reject Pakistani attempts to compel the Kabul regime and the international community to accept Mullah Omar and other top Taliban leaders, the Haqqani network, or Hekmatyar as part of an Afghan coalition government. They are poison pills that have destroyed past Afghan peace efforts. Pakistan has legitimate security interests in Afghanistan, but they do not extend to choosing who rules in Kabul.

The United States and its allies should also prepare U.N. Security Council resolutions to apply sanctions on Pakistan similar to those used against other state sponsors of terrorism. The resolutions could call on member-states to impose an arms embargo on Pakistan and restrict foreign travel of Pakistani military and intelligence officials known to support terrorist sanctuaries in Pakistan.

There can be no assurance that this firmer approach with Islamabad will succeed. But changing Pakistan's policy is the only course that holds out hope to eliminate its terrorist sanctuaries, deal a major blow to international terrorism, and end the long Afghan war. In the end, only the Pakistani people and their leaders can make the decision to suppress the violent jihadist forces in their country, returning it to a path of democracy, modernization, and religious tolerance. This is a prerequisite for a peaceful Afghanistan and a new era of economic growth in Central Eurasia not witnessed since the Silk Road's heyday over a millennium ago.